

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request further examination and reconsideration of the instant case in view of the instant response. Claims 1, 3-7, 8, 9, 11-19 and 21 remain pending in the case. Claims 1, 8, 13 and 15 have been amended herein. Claims 2, 10 and 20 have been cancelled herein. No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 is objected to because of informalities. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating the informality and Applicants have amended Claim 13 to overcome the objection. As such, Applicants respectfully request the objection be removed.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 20, and 21 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for indicating allowable subject matter.

As such, Applicants have amended Independent Claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 2. Applicants submit that Claims 1, 3-7 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 1 and 3-7 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 8 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 10. Applicants submit that Claims 8, 9 and 11-14 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 8, 9 and 11-14 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 15 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 20. Applicants submit that Claims 15-19 and 21 are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 15-19 and 21 is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1,4,5,8,12,15,18 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Nagae (U.S. Patent No. 5,151,992). The rejection is moot in light of Applicants amendments to Independent Claims 1, 8 and 15.

Applicants have amended Independent Claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 2. Applicants submit that Claims 1, 4 and 5 are patentable over Nagae and are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 1, 4 and 5 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 8 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 10. Applicants submit that Claims 8 and 12 are patentable over Nagae and are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 8 and 12 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 15 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 20. Applicants submit that Claims 15, 18 and 19 are patentable over Nagae and are now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claims 15, 18 and 19 is earnestly solicited.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3, 9 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagae in view of Grosser et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,182,173 B1, hereafter referred to as Grosser. The rejection is moot in light of Applicants amendments to Independent Claims 1, 8 and 15.

As stated above, Applicants have amended Independent Claim 1 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 2. Applicants submit that Claim 3 is patentable over Nagae in view of Grosser and is now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claim 3 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 8 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 10. Applicants submit that Claim 9 is patentable over Nagae in view of Grosser and is now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claim 9 is earnestly solicited.

Applicants have also amended Independent Claim 15 to include the limitations of allowable Claim 20. Applicants submit that Claim 17 is patentable over Nagae in view of Grosser and is now in condition for allowance and allowance of Claim 17 is earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above listed remarks, reconsideration of the Claims is requested. Based on the arguments presented above, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 1, 3-7, 8, 9, 11-19 and 21 overcome the rejections and objections of record and, therefore, allowance of Claims 1, 3-7, 8, 9, 11-19 and 21 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner have a question regarding the instant response, the Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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